

LOUISIANA MOTORCYCLE SAFETY, AWARENESS AND OPERATOR TRAINING PROGRAM

PURPOSE

The Motorcycle Safety, Awareness and Operator Training Program's purpose is to improve the safety of motorcyclists on Louisiana's streets and highways. In an attempt to lower the number of motorcycle accidents, injuries, and related fatalities, this national award-winning Program has projects in motorcycle operator training, public information, and research. These projects address both motorcyclists and motorists.

Specifically the proposed goals of these projects are as follows:

- the certification of motorcycle safety instructors;
- the education of motorcycle operators in the safe and skillful operation of motorcycles;
- the training of appropriate law enforcement personnel in the safe and skillful operation of motorcycles;
- the development and implementation of campaigns to promote participation in the Program and the awareness of motorcycles in the traffic environment;
- the expansion and collection of both statistical data and information on motorcycle safety.

EDUCATION

Today, there is little, if any, argument about the need for motorcycle operator training courses in Louisiana. -Research has shown that Motorcycles represent approximately 2% of the vehicles on our roads, yet the operators and passengers of these vehicles account for 10% of the fatalities. Ninety two percent (92%) of the motorcyclists involved in crashes were self-taught or they learned from family or friends. In addition, over 80% of all reported motorcycle crashes resulted in the injury or death of the motorcyclist.

The Department developed its first course in two-wheel motor vehicle safety over thirty-five years ago. The Department now offers motorcycle operator training for both the novice and the advanced motorcyclist. The training is accomplished through two different Motorcycle Safety and Rider Education Courses, which are based on research studies that not only cited the critical skills needed in the operation of a motorcycle but also provided for curriculum development. Both courses are research based and contain the latest in audio-visual aids, books, and instructor teaching materials.

BASIC MOTORCYCLE SAFETY AND RIDER EDUCATION COURSE

The Department's Basic Motorcycle Safety and Rider Education course is designed for the novice motorcyclist. The course contains a minimum of seven hours of classroom instruction and eight hours of hands-on instruction. The overall purpose of this course is to teach the student the many responsibilities of motorcycling and the basic skills needed to operate a motorcycle safely.

ADVANCED MOTORCYCLE SAFETY AND RIDER EDUCATION COURSE

The Advanced Motorcycle Safety and Rider Education course is offered by the Department for the experienced motorcyclist who wants to be trained professionally and who want to enhance the various riding skills learned in the basic course. The course, which contains a minimum of four hours of classroom instruction and four hours of actual hands-on experience, has the potential to develop a hazard detection and avoidance capability for the rider who participates in the advanced course.

COURSE LOCATIONS

Participation in motorcycle operator training courses in Louisiana is voluntary. Courses are generally implemented in targeted areas of the state that have adequate training sites available and that show a high incidence of motorcycle traffic accidents. These areas include major cities and the more populated parishes of the state. However, courses are conducted in other areas when local interest and potential course participation justify their implementation.

INSTRUCTOR TRAINING

Only appropriately certified instructors qualify to teach Department Motorcycle Safety and Rider Education Courses. In order to become a Department motorcycle safety instructor, an individual must meet certain criteria and successfully complete an approved Motorcycle Safety Instructor Preparation Course. Courses of this nature are conducted by the Department, contain a minimum of fifty hours of instruction, and consist of classroom, laboratory and teaching experiences. Once certified as a motorcycle safety instructor by the Department, an individual qualifies to become an active instructor in the Program.

LICENSING

The Department does not license motorcycle operators. However, the individual that successfully completes a Department Motorcycle Safety and Rider Education Course is exempt in Louisiana from taking the practical portion of the licensing exam for a motorcycle endorsement. A qualified motorcycle license applicant must present his/her Department Motorcycle Safety and Rider Education Course completion certificate at the time of the licensing examination in order to qualify for such an exemption.

Also, Motorcycle Safety and Rider Education Course participants are given a Louisiana Department of Education Motorcycle Operator Manual, which can serve as a valuable study guide when preparing to take the written portion of the licensing motorcycle endorsement exam.. The manual provides vital information regarding the safe and skilled operation of motorcycles; in addition, a section on state motorcycling laws is included.

RESEARCH

Over the years, the Department's Motorcycle Safety and Rider Education Course curricular design and instruction techniques have gone through continuous refinement. Relevant data collection and research by Program staff contribute to on-going course improvement. In order to

accomplish the proposed goals of all of the Program projects, Department personnel study the behavior and attitudes of motorcyclists and users of other vehicles, along with the motorcycle safety programs of other states and the related research performed by higher education.

Continuous research and revision enable the Department to evaluate the Program's progress and better assist those in need of its services.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

One of the objectives of the Program is to inform the public of the presence of motorcycles in today's traffic environment.

INFORMATION PROJECT

The Department's Ride Smart Campaign, which incorporates the "Drive Aware We're Out There" message, and the proclaiming of Motorcycle Safety Week both alert the driving public to be on the look out for motorcycles and to respect them as they would other vehicles on the road. "Watch for Motorcycles - Share the Road, Louisiana" is another Program awareness message being heard throughout the state by way of the media and bumper stickers. The Department is constantly exploring new ideas to disseminate valuable and interesting motorcycle safety information to the public. Motorcycle Safety and Rider Education Course implementation dates are announced through the local media and the distribution of posters.

PUBLICATION AND MATERIALS

Numerous Program publications and materials are available to both motorcyclists and the users of other vehicles to promote safe motorcycling and motorcycle awareness.

These items can provide motorcycle operators with vital tips on helmet use, protective gear and safe riding techniques. Motorists are learning how to safely share the road with motorcyclists through films and written materials. Fresh new ways to provide valuable and interesting motorcycle information are constantly being explored.